CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1.   A method of sending a print job to a printer, comprising:

attaching at least one document to an e-mail message;

sending the e-mail message over a network to an e-mail enabled printer; and

extracting the at least one document from the e-mail message by the e-mail enabled printer.

2.   The method of claim 1, further comprising storing the at least one document in job retention of the e-mail enabled printer by the e-mail enabled printer.

3.   The method of claim 2, further comprising specifying instructions for said storing the at least one document in said job retention in a portion of the e-mail message and reading said instructions by said e-mail enabled printer.

4.   The method of claim 3, wherein said storing the at least one document in said job retention comprises reading the instructions for storing the at least one document by the e-mail enabled printer.

5.   The method of claim 1, further comprising printing the at least one document in conjunction with said storing the at least one document in job retention of the e-mail enabled printer.

6.   The method of claim 5, further comprising specifying instructions for said printing the at least one document in a portion of the e-mail message.

7.   The method of claim 6, wherein said specifying instructions for said printing comprises specifying printing attributes for printing the at least one document.

8.   The method of claim 7, wherein said specifying instructions for said printing comprises specifying scheduling instructions for scheduling said printing of the at least one document.

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9.   The method of claim 6, wherein said specifying instructions for said printing comprises providing printer readable language in said portion of the e-mail message.

10.   The method of claim 9, further comprising encoding said printer readable language prior to said sending the e-mail message over a network.

11.   The method of claim 10, wherein said encoding comprises encoding said printer readable language in MIME encoding fields.

12.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is attached to the e-mail message in an application-specific format.

13.   The method of claim 12, further comprising converting the application specific format into a print ready file by the e-mail enabled printer.

14.   The method of claim 1, wherein the at least one document is attached to the e-mail message in a bit-mapped image format.

15.   A method of distributing a document for printing, comprising:
attaching at least one document to an e-mail message;
sending the e-mail message to an e-mail enabled print server of a local network;
extracting the at least one document at the e-mail enabled print server; and
sending the at least one document to a network printer of the local network by the e-mail
        enabled print server.

16.   The method of claim 15, further comprising converting the at least one document into a print ready file by the e-mail enabled print server prior to said sending the at least one document to the network printer.

17.   The method of claim 15, further comprising storing the at least one document in a job retention portion of the network printer.

18. The method of claim 15, further comprising printing the at least one document by the network printer.

19. A system for receiving and distributing a remotely sent print job to a network printer, comprising:
an e-mail enabled print server device for communication with a network, the e-mail enabled print server configured for receiving an e-mail message having a document sent as a print job attached thereto, the e-mail enabled print server configured for extracting the document from the e-mail message and for transmitting the document to at least one network printer device; and
a network printer device configured to be communicatively coupled to the e-mail enabled print server device over the network, the network printer device configured for storing and for printing print jobs transmitted by the e-mail enabled print server device.

20. The system of claim 19, wherein the e-mail enabled print server device includes at least one microprocessor configured for converting the document sent as a print job into a print ready file.

21. A computer system for processing print jobs, comprising:
an e-mail enabled device for creating and sending e-mail with attachments;
an e-mail enabled printer for receiving e-mails, extracting attachments from said e-mails, and printing said attachments; and
a network for communicating e-mail between said e-mail enabled device and said e-mail enabled printer.

22. The computer system of claim 21, wherein said e-mail enabled printer includes a job retention memory for storing print jobs.

23. The computer system of claim 21, wherein said e-mail enabled printer comprises a set of instructions for encoding and decoding attachments into a printer readable language.

24.   A computer system for processing print jobs, comprising:

an e-mail enabled device for creating and sending e-mail with attachments;

an e-mail enabled print server for receiving said e-mail with attachments, extracting said

attachments from said e-mail, and sending said attachments for printing;

a network printer for receiving and printing said attachments extracted from said e-mail by

said e-mail enabled print server; and

a network for facilitating communications between said e-mail enabled device, said e-mail

enabled server, and said network printer.